



ESSENTIAL WESTERN NOVELS

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TACET BOOKS

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Introduction

Western is a genre of fiction set primarily in the latter half of the 19th century in the Western United States, which is styled the "Old West". Its stories commonly center on the life of a nomadic cowboy or gunfighter armed with a revolver and a rifle who rides a horse. Cowboys and gunslingers typically wear Stetson hats, neckerchief bandannas, vests, spurs, cowboy boots, and buckskins (alternatively dusters). Recurring characters include the aforementioned cowboys, Native Americans, Spaniards, Mexicans, bandits, lawmen, bounty hunters, outlaws, gamblers, soldiers (especially mounted cavalry, such as buffalo soldiers), and settlers (farmers, ranchers, and townsfolk). The ambience is usually punctuated with a Western music score, including American and Spanish/Mexican folk music such as country, Native American music, New Mexico music, and rancheras.

Westerns often stress the harshness of the wilderness and frequently set the action in an arid, desolate landscape of deserts and mountains. Often, the vast landscape plays an important role, presenting a "mythic vision of the plains and deserts of the American West." Specific settings include ranches, small frontier towns, saloons, railways, wilderness, and isolated military forts of the Wild West.

Common plots include:

- The construction of a railroad or a telegraph line on the wild frontier.
- Ranchers protecting their family ranch from rustlers or large landowners, or who build a ranch empire.

- Revenge stories, which hinge on the chase and pursuit by someone who has been wronged.
- Stories about cavalry fighting Native Americans.
- Outlaw gang plots.
- Stories about a lawman or bounty hunter tracking down his quarry.

Many Westerns use a stock plot of depicting a crime, then showing the pursuit of the wrongdoer, ending in revenge and retribution, which is often dispensed through a shootout or quick-draw duel.

The Western has been recognized as the most popular Hollywood film genre of the early 20th century through the 1960s. Western films first became well-attended in the 1930s. John Ford's landmark Western film *Stagecoach* (1939) became one of the biggest hits of that year, and made John Wayne a mainstream movie star. The popularity of Westerns continued to grow in the 1940s, with the release of films such as *The Ox-Bow Incident* (1943), *My Darling Clementine* (1946), *Fort Apache* (1948), and *Red River* (1948). The 1950s have been described as the "Golden Age of the Western," and saw the release of films such as *Broken Arrow* (1950), *High Noon* (1952), *Shane* (1953), *Wichita* (1955), *The Searchers* (1956), and *Rio Bravo* (1959). Notable Western films released in the 1960s include *Cat Ballou* (1965), *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (1966), *The Wild Bunch* (1969), and *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969).

Classic Westerns such as these have been the inspiration for various films about Western-type characters in contemporary settings, such as *Junior Bonner* (1972), set in the 1970s, and *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada* (2005), set in the 21st century.

The West and American Ideals

By Frederick Jackson Turner^[1]

True to American traditions that each succeeding generation ought to find in the Republic a better home, once in every year the colleges and universities summon the nation to lift its eyes from the routine of work, in order to take stock of the country's purposes and achievements, to examine its past and consider its future.

This attitude of self-examination is hardly characteristic of the people as a whole. Particularly it is not characteristic of the historic American. He has been an opportunist rather than a dealer in general ideas. Destiny set him in a current which bore him swiftly along through such a wealth of opportunity that reflection and well-considered planning seemed wasted time. He knew not where he was going, but he was on his way, cheerful, optimistic, busy and buoyant.

To-day we are reaching a changed condition, less apparent perhaps, in the newer regions than in the old, but sufficiently obvious to extend the commencement frame of mind from the college to the country as a whole. The swift and inevitable current of the upper reaches of the nation's history has borne it to the broader expanse and slower stretches which mark the nearness of the level sea. The vessel, no longer carried along by the rushing waters, finds it necessary to determine its own directions on this new ocean of its future, to give conscious consideration to its motive power and to its steering gear.

It matters not so much that those who address these college men and women upon life, give conflicting answers to the questions of whence and whither: the pause for

remembrance, for reflection and for aspiration is wholesome in itself.

Although the American people are becoming more self-conscious, more responsive to the appeal to act by deliberate choices, we should be over-sanguine if we believed that even in this new day these commencement surveys were taken to heart by the general public, or that they were directly and immediately influential upon national thought and action.

But even while we check our enthusiasm by this realization of the common thought, we must take heart. The University's peculiar privilege and distinction lie in the fact that it is not the passive instrument of the State to voice its current ideas. Its problem is not that of expressing tendencies. Its mission is to create tendencies and to direct them. Its problem is that of leadership and of ideals. It is called, of course, to justify the support which the public gives it, by working in close and sympathetic touch with those it serves. More than that, it would lose important element of strength if it failed to recognize the fact that improvement and creative movement often come from the masses themselves, instinctively moving toward a better order. The University's graduates must be fitted to take their places naturally and effectually in the common life of the time.

But the University is called especially to justify its existence by giving to its sons and daughters something which they could not well have gotten through the ordinary experiences of the life outside its walls. It is called to serve the time by independent research and by original thought. If it were a mere recording instrument of conventional opinion and average information, it is hard to see why the University should exist at all. To clasp hands with the common life in order that it may lift that life, to be a radiant center

enkindling the society in which it has its being, these are primary duties of the University. Fortunate the State which gives free play to this spirit of inquiry. Let it "grubstake" its intellectual prospectors and send them forth where "the trails run out and stop." A famous scientist holds that the universal ether bears vital germs which impinging upon a dead world would bring life to it. So, at least it is, in the world of thought, where energized ideals put in the air and carried here and there by the waves and currents of the intellectual atmosphere, fertilize vast inert areas.

The University, therefore, has a double duty. On the one hand it must aid in the improvement of the general economic and social environment. It must help on in the work of scientific discovery and of making such conditions of existence, economic, political and social, as will produce more fertile and responsive soil for a higher and better life. It must stimulate a wider demand on the part of the public for right leadership. It must extend its operations more widely among the people and sink deeper shafts through social strata to find new supplies of intellectual gold in popular levels yet untouched. And on the other hand, it must find and fit men and women for leadership. It must both awaken new demands and it must satisfy those demands by trained leaders with new motives, with new incentives to ambition, with higher and broader conception of what constitute the prize in life, of what constitutes success. The University has to deal with both the soil and sifted seed in the agriculture of the human spirit.

Its efficiency is not the efficiency which the business engineer is fitted to appraise. If it is a training ship, it is a training ship bound on a voyage of discovery, seeking new horizons. The economy of the University's consumption can only be rightly measured by the later times which shall possess those new realms of the spirit which its voyage

shall reveal. If the ships of Columbus had engaged in a profitable coastwise traffic between Palos and Cadiz they might have saved sail cloth, but their keels would never have grated on the shores of a New World.

The appeal of the undiscovered is strong in America. For three centuries the fundamental process in its history was the westward movement, the discovery and occupation of the vast free spaces of the continent. We are the first generation of Americans who can look back upon that era as a historic movement now coming to its end. Other generations have been so much a part of it that they could hardly comprehend its significance. To them it seemed inevitable. The free land and the natural resources seemed practically inexhaustible. Nor were they aware of the fact that their most fundamental traits, their institutions, even their ideals were shaped by this interaction between the wilderness and themselves.

American democracy was born of no theorist's dream; it was not carried in the Susan Constant to Virginia, nor in the Mayflower to Plymouth. It came out of the American forest, and it gained new strength each time it touched a new frontier. Not the constitution, but free land and an abundance of natural resources open to a fit people, made the democratic type of society in America for three centuries while it occupied its empire.

To-day we are looking with a shock upon a changed world. The national problem is no longer how to cut and burn away the vast screen of the dense and daunting forest; it is how to save and wisely use the remaining timber. It is no longer how to get the great spaces of fertile prairie land in humid zones out of the hands of the government into the hands of the pioneer; these lands have already passed into private possession. No longer is it a question of how to avoid or cross the Great Plains and the arid desert. It is a question of

how to conquer those rejected lands by new method of farming and by cultivating new crops from seed collected by the government and by scientists from the cold, dry steppes of Siberia, the burning sands of Egypt, and the remote interior of China. It is a problem of how to bring the precious rills of water on to the alkali and sage brush. Population is increasing faster than the food supply.

New farm lands no longer increase decade after decade in areas equal to those of European states. While the ratio of increase of improved land declines, the value of farm lands rise and the price of food leaps upward, reversing the old ratio between the two. The cry of scientific farming and the conservation of natural resources replaces the cry of rapid conquest of the wilderness. We have so far won our national home, wrested from it its first rich treasures, and drawn to it the unfortunate of other lands, that we are already obliged to compare ourselves with settled states of the Old World. In place of our attitude of contemptuous indifference to the legislation of such countries as Germany and England, even Western States like Wisconsin send commissions to study their systems of taxation, workingmen's insurance, old age pensions and a great variety of other remedies for social ills.

If we look about the periphery of the nation, everywhere we see the indications that our world is changing. On the streets of Northeastern cities like New York and Boston, the faces which we meet are to a surprising extent those of Southeastern Europe. Puritan New England, which turned its capital into factories and mills and drew to its shores an army of cheap labor, governed these people for a time by a ruling class like an upper stratum between which and the lower strata there was no assimilation. There was no such evolution into an assimilated commonwealth as is seen in Middle Western agricultural States, where immigrant and old native stock came in together and built up a homogeneous

society on the principle of give and take. But now the Northeastern coast finds its destiny, politically and economically, passing away from the descendants of the Puritans. It is the little Jewish boy, the Greek or the Sicilian, who takes the traveler through historic streets, now the home of these newer people to the Old North Church or to Paul Revere's house, or to Tea Wharf, and tells you in his strange patois the story of revolution against oppression.

Along the Southern Atlantic and the Gulf coast, in spite of the preservative influence of the negro, whose presence has always called out resistance to change on the part of the whites, the forces of social and industrial transformation are at work. The old tidewater aristocracy has surrendered to the up-country democrats. Along the line of the Alleghanies like an advancing column, the forces of Northern capital, textile and steel mills, year after year extend their invasion into the lower South. New Orleans, once the mistress of the commerce of the Mississippi Valley, is awakening to new dreams of world commerce. On the southern border, similar invasions of American capital have been entering Mexico. At the same time, the opening of the Panama Canal has completed the dream of the ages of the Straits of Anian between Atlantic and Pacific. Four hundred years ago, Balboa raised the flag of Spain at the edge of the Sea of the West and we are now preparing to celebrate both that anniversary, and the piercing of the continent. New relations have been created between Spanish America and the United States and the world is watching the mediation of Argentina, Brazil and Chile between the contending forces of Mexico and the Union. Once more alien national interests lie threatening at our borders, but we no longer appeal to the Monroe Doctrine and send our armies of frontiersmen to settle our concerns off-hand. We take council with European nations and with the sisterhood of South America, and propose a remedy of social reorganization in place of

imperious will and force. Whether the effort will succeed or not, it is a significant indication that an old order is passing away, when such a solution is undertaken by a President of Scotch Presbyterian stock, born in the State of Virginia.

If we turn to the Northern border, where we are about to celebrate a century of peace with England, we see in progress, like a belated procession of our own history the spread of pioneers, the opening of new wildernesses, the building of new cities, the growth of a new and mighty nation. That old American advance of the wheat farmer from the Connecticut to the Mohawk, and the Genesee, from the Great Valley of Pennsylvania to the Ohio Valley and the prairies of the Middle West, is now by its own momentum and under the stimulus of Canadian homesteads and the high price of wheat, carried across the national border to the once lone plains where the Hudson Bay dog trains crossed the desolate snows of the wild North Land. In the Pacific Northwest the era of construction has not ended, but it is so rapidly in progress that we can already see the closing of the age of the pioneer. Already Alaska beckons on the north, and pointing to her wealth of natural resources asks the nation on what new terms the new age will deal with her. Across the Pacific looms Asia, no longer a remote vision and a symbol of the unchanging, but borne as by mirage close to our shores and raising grave questions of the common destiny of the people of the ocean. The dreams of Benton and of Seward of a regenerated Orient, when the long march of westward civilization should complete its circle, seem almost to be in process of realization. The age of the Pacific Ocean begins, mysterious and unfathomable in its meaning for our own future.

Turning to view the interior, we see the same picture of change. When the Superintendent of the Census in 1890 declared the frontier line no longer traceable, the beginning

of the rush into Oklahoma had just occurred. Here where the broken fragments of Indian nations from the East had been gathered and where the wilder tribes of the Southwest were being settled, came the rush of the land-hungry pioneer. Almost at a blow the old Indian territory passed away, populous cities came into being and it was not long before gushing oil wells made a new era of sudden wealth. The farm lands of the Middle West taken as free homesteads or bought for a mere pittance, have risen so in value that the original owners have in an increasing degree either sold them in order to reinvest in the newer cheap lands of the West, or have moved into the town and have left the tillage to tenant farmers. The growth of absentee ownership of the soil is producing a serious problem in the former centers of the Granger and the Populist. Along the Old Northwest the Great Lakes are becoming a new Mediterranean Sea joining the realms of wheat and iron ore, at one end with the coal and furnaces of the forks of the Ohio, where the most intense and wide-reaching center of industrial energy exists. City life like that of the East, manufactures and accumulated capital, seem to be reproducing in the center of the Republic the tendencies already so plain on the Atlantic Coast.

Across the Great Plains where buffalo and Indian held sway successive industrial waves are passing. The old free range gave place to the ranch, the ranch to the homestead and now in places in the arid lands the homestead is replaced by the ten or twenty acre irrigated fruit farm. The age of cheap land, cheap corn and wheat, and cheap cattle has gone forever. The federal government has undertaken vast paternal enterprises of reclamation of the desert.

In the Rocky Mountains where at the time of Civil War, the first important rushes to gold and silver mines carried the frontier backward on a march toward the east, the most amazing transformations have occurred. Here, where

prospectors made new trails, and lived the wild free life of mountain men, here where the human spirit seemed likely to attain the largest measure of individual freedom, and where fortune beckoned to the common man, have come revolutions wrought by the demand for organized industry and capital. In the regions where the popular tribunal and the free competitive life flourished, we have seen law and order break down in the unmitigated collision of great aggregations of capital, with each other and with organized socialistic labor. The Cripple Creek strikes, the contests at Butte, the Goldfield mobs, the recent Colorado fighting, all tell a similar story,—the solid impact of contending forces in regions where civic power and loyalty to the State have never fully developed. Like the Grand Cañon, where in dazzling light the huge geologic history is written so large that none may fail to read it, so in the Rocky Mountains the dangers of modern American industrial tendencies have been exposed.

As we crossed the Cascades on our way to Seattle, one of the passengers was moved to explain his feeling on the excellence of Puget Sound in contrast with the remaining visible Universe. He did it well in spite of irreverent interruptions from those fellow travelers who were unconverted children of the East, and at last he broke forth in passionate challenge, "Why should I not love Seattle! It took me from the slums of the Atlantic Coast, a poor Swedish boy with hardly fifteen dollars in my pocket. It gave me a home by the beautiful sea; it spread before my eyes a vision of snow-capped peaks and smiling fields; it brought abundance and a new life to me and my children and I love it, I love it! If I were a multi-millionaire I would charter freight cars and carry away from the crowded tenements and noisome alleys of the eastern cities and the Old World the toiling masses, and let them loose in our vast forests and ore-laden mountains to learn what life really is!" And

my heart was stirred by his words and by the whirling spaces of woods and peaks through which we passed.

But as I looked and listened to this passionate outcry, I remembered the words of Talleyrand, the exiled Bishop of Autun, in Washington's administration. Looking down from an eminence not far from Philadelphia upon a wilderness which is now in the heart of that huge industrial society where population presses on the means of life, even the cold-blooded and cynical Talleyrand, gazing on those unpeopled hills and forests, kindled with the vision of coming clearings, the smiling farms and grazing herds that were to be, the populous towns that should be built, the newer and finer social organization that should there arise. And then I remembered the hall in Harvard's museum of social ethics through which I pass to my lecture room when I speak on the history of the Westward movement. That hall is covered with an exhibit of the work in Pittsburgh steel mills, and of the congested tenements. Its charts and diagrams tell of the long hours of work, the death rate, the relation of typhoid to the slums, the gathering of the poor of all Southeastern Europe to make a civilization at that center of American industrial energy and vast capital that is a social tragedy. As I enter my lecture room through that hall, I speak of the young Washington leading his Virginia frontiersmen to the magnificent forest at the forks of the Ohio. Where Braddock and his men, "carving a cross on the wilderness rim," were struck by the painted savages in the primeval woods, huge furnaces belch forth perpetual fires and Huns and Bulgars, Poles and Sicilians struggle for a chance to earn their daily bread, and live a brutal and degraded life. Irresistibly there rushed across my mind the memorable words of Huxley:

"Even the best of modern civilization appears to me to exhibit a condition of mankind which neither embodies any

worthy ideal nor even possesses the merit of stability. I do not hesitate to express the opinion that, if there is no hope of a large improvement of the condition of the greater part of the human family; if it is true that the increase of knowledge, the winning of a greater dominion over Nature, which is its consequence, and the wealth which follows upon that dominion, are to make no difference in the extent and the intensity of Want, with its concomitant physical and moral degradation, among the masses of the people, I should hail the advent of some kindly comet, which would sweep the whole affair away, as a desirable consummation."

But if there is disillusion and shock and apprehension as we come to realize these changes, to strong men and women there is challenge and inspiration in them too. In place of old frontiers of wilderness, there are new frontiers of unwon fields of science, fruitful for the needs of the race; there are frontiers of better social domains yet unexplored. Let us hold to our attitude of faith and courage, and creative zeal. Let us dream as our fathers dreamt and let us make our dreams come true.

"Daughters of Time, the hypocritic days, Muffled and dumb like barefoot dervishes, And marching single in an endless file, Bear diadems and fagots in their hands. To each they offer gifts after his will Bread, kingdoms, stars, and sky that hold them all. I, in my pleached garden watched the pomp, Forgot my morning wishes, hastily Took a few herbs and apples and the day Turned and departed silent. I, too late, Under her solemn fillet, saw the scorn!"

What were America's "morning wishes"? From the beginning of that long westward march of the American people America has never been the home of mere contented materialism. It has continuously sought new ways and dreamed of a perfected social type.

In the fifteenth century when men dealt with the New World which Columbus found, the ideal of discovery was dominant. Here was placed within the reach of men whose ideas had been bounded by the Atlantic, new realms to be explored. America became the land of European dreams, its Fortunate Islands were made real, where, in the imagination of old Europe, peace and happiness, as well as riches and eternal youth, were to be found. To Sir Edwin Sandys and his friends of the London Company, Virginia offered an opportunity to erect the Republic for which they had longed in vain in England. To the Puritans, New England was the new land of freedom, wherein they might establish the institutions of God, according to their own faith. As the vision died away in Virginia toward the close of the seventeenth century, it was taken up anew by the fiery Bacon with his revolution to establish a real democracy in place of the rule of the planter aristocracy, that formed along the coast. Hardly had he been overthrown when in the eighteenth century, the democratic ideal was rejuvenated by the strong frontiersmen, who pressed beyond the New England Coast into the Berkshires and up the valleys of the Green Mountains of Vermont, and by the Scotch-Irish and German pioneers who followed the Great Valley from Pennsylvania into the Upland South. In both the Yankee frontiersmen and the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians of the South, the Calvinistic conception of the importance of the individual, bound by free covenant to his fellow men and to God, was a compelling influence, and all their wilderness experience combined to emphasize the ideals of opening new ways, of giving freer play to the individual, and of constructing democratic society.

When the backwoodsmen crossed the Alleghanies they put between themselves and the Atlantic Coast a barrier which seemed to separate them from a region already too much like the Europe they had left, and as they followed the

courses of the rivers that flowed to the Mississippi, they called themselves "Men of the Western Waters," and their new home in the Mississippi Valley was the "Western World." Here, by the thirties, Jacksonian democracy flourished, strong in the faith of the intrinsic excellence of the common man, in his right to make his own place in the world, and in his capacity to share in government. But while Jacksonian democracy demanded these rights, it was also loyal to leadership as the very name implies. It was ready to follow to the uttermost the man in whom it placed its trust, whether the hero were frontier fighter or president, and it even rebuked and limited its own legislative representatives and recalled its senators when they ran counter to their chosen executive. Jacksonian democracy was essentially rural. It was based on the good fellowship and genuine social feeling of the frontier, in which classes and inequalities of fortune played little part. But it did not demand equality of condition, for there was abundance of natural resources and the belief that the self-made man had a right to his success in the free competition which western life afforded, was as prominent in their thought as was the love of democracy. On the other hand, they viewed governmental restraints with suspicion as a limitation on their right to work out their own individuality.

For the banking institutions and capitalists of the East they had an instinctive antipathy. Already they feared that the "money power" as Jackson called it, was planning to make hewers of wood and drawers of water of the common people.

In this view they found allies among the labor leaders of the East, who in the same period began their fight for better conditions of the wage earner. These Locofocos were the first Americans to demand fundamental social changes for the benefit of the workers in the cities. Like the Western

pioneers, they protested against monopolies and special privilege. But they also had a constructive policy, whereby society was to be kept democratic by free gifts of the public land, so that surplus labor might not bid against itself, but might find an outlet in the West. Thus to both the labor theorist and the practical pioneer, the existence of what seemed inexhaustible cheap land and unpossessed resources was the condition of democracy. In these years of the thirties and forties, Western democracy took on its distinctive form. Travelers like De Tocqueville and Harriet Martineau, came to study and to report it enthusiastically to Europe.

Side by side with this westward marching army of individualistic liberty-loving democratic backwoodsmen, went a more northern stream of pioneers, who cherished similar ideas, but added to them the desire to create new industrial centers, to build up factories, to build railroads, and to develop the country by founding cities and extending prosperity. They were ready to call upon legislatures to aid in this, by subscriptions to stock, grants of franchises, promotion of banking and internal improvements. These were the Whig followers of that other Western leader, Henry Clay, and their early strength lay in the Ohio Valley, and particularly among the well-to-do. In the South their strength was found among the aristocracy of the Cotton Kingdom.

Both of these Western groups, Whigs and Democrats alike, had one common ideal: the desire to leave their children a better heritage than they themselves had received, and both were fired with devotion to the ideal of creating in this New World a home more worthy of mankind. Both were ready to break with the past, to boldly strike out new lines of social endeavor, and both believed in American expansion.

Before these tendencies had worked themselves out, three new forces entered. In the sudden extension of our boundaries to the Pacific Coast, which took place in the forties, the nation won so vast a domain that its resources seemed illimitable and its society seemed able to throw off all its maladies by the very presence of these vast new spaces. At the same period the great activity of railroad building to the Mississippi Valley occurred, making these lands available and diverting attention to the task of economic construction. The third influence was the slavery question which, becoming acute, shaped the American ideals and public discussion for nearly a generation. Viewed from one angle, this struggle involved the great question of national unity. From another it involved the question of the relations of labor and capital, democracy and aristocracy. It was not without significance that Abraham Lincoln became the very type of American pioneer democracy, the first adequate and elemental demonstration to the world that that democracy could produce a man who belonged to the ages.

After the war, new national energies were set loose, and new construction and development engaged the attention of the Westerners as they occupied prairies and Great Plains and mountains. Democracy and capitalistic development did not seem antagonistic.

With the passing of the frontier, Western social and political ideals took new form. Capital began to consolidate in even greater masses, and increasingly attempted to reduce to system and control the processes of industrial development. Labor with equal step organized its forces to destroy the old competitive system. It is not strange that the Western pioneers took alarm for their ideals of democracy as the outcome of the free struggle for the national resources

became apparent. They espoused the cause of governmental activity.

It was a new gospel, for the Western radical became convinced that he must sacrifice his ideal of individualism and free competition in order to maintain his ideal of democracy. Under this conviction the Populist revised the pioneer conception of government. He saw in government no longer something outside of him, but the people themselves shaping their own affairs. He demanded therefore an extension of the powers of governments in the interest of his historic ideal of democratic society. He demanded not only free silver, but the ownership of the agencies of communication and transportation, the income tax, the postal savings bank, the provision of means of credit for agriculture, the construction of more effective devices to express the will of the people, primary nominations, direct elections, initiative, referendum and recall. In a word, capital, labor, and the Western pioneer, all deserted the ideal of competitive individualism in order to organize their interests in more effective combinations. The disappearance of the frontier, the closing of the era which was marked by the influence of the West as a form of society, brings with it new problems of social adjustment, new demands for considering our past ideals and our present needs.

Let us recall the conditions of the foreign relations along our borders, the dangers that wait us if we fail to unite in the solution of our domestic problems. Let us recall those internal evidences of the destruction of our old social order. If we take to heart this warning, we shall do well also to recount our historic ideals, to take stock of those purposes, and fundamental assumptions that have gone to make the American spirit and the meaning of America in world history.

First of all, there was the ideal of discovery, the courageous determination to break new paths, indifference to the dogma that because an institution or a condition exists, it must remain. All American experience has gone to the making of the spirit of innovation; it is in the blood and will not be repressed.

Then, there was the ideal of democracy, the ideal of a free self-directing people, responsive to leadership in the forming of programs and their execution, but insistent that the procedure should be that of free choice, not of compulsion.

But there was also the ideal of individualism. This democratic society was not a disciplined army, where all must keep step and where the collective interests destroyed individual will and work. Rather it was a mobile mass of freely circulating atoms, each seeking its own place and finding play for its own powers and for its own original initiative. We cannot lay too much stress upon this point, for it was at the very heart of the whole American movement. The world was to be made a better world by the example of a democracy in which there was freedom of the individual, in which there was the vitality and mobility productive of originality and variety.

Bearing in mind the far-reaching influence of the disappearance of unlimited resources open to all men for the taking, and considering the recoil of the common man when he saw the outcome of the competitive struggle for these resources as the supply came to its end over most of the nation, we can understand the reaction against individualism and in favor of drastic assertion of the powers of government. Legislation is taking the place of the free lands as the means of preserving the ideal of democracy. But at the same time it is endangering the other pioneer ideal of creative and competitive individualism. Both were essential and constituted what was best in America's

contribution to history and to progress. Both must be preserved if the nation would be true to its past, and would fulfil its highest destiny. It would be a grave misfortune if these people so rich in experience, in self-confidence and aspiration, in creative genius, should turn to some Old World discipline of socialism or plutocracy, or despotic rule, whether by class or by dictator. Nor shall we be driven to these alternatives. Our ancient hopes, our courageous faith, our underlying good humor and love of fair play will triumph in the end. There will be give and take in all directions. There will be disinterested leadership, under loyalty to the best American ideals. Nowhere is this leadership more likely to arise than among the men trained in the Universities, aware of the promise of the past and the possibilities of the future. The times call for new ambitions and new motives.

In a most suggestive essay on the Problems of Modern Democracy, Mr. Godkin has said:

M. de Tocqueville and all his followers take it for granted that the great incentive to excellence, in all countries in which excellence is found, is the patronage and encouragement of an aristocracy; that democracy is generally content with mediocrity. But where is the proof of this? The incentive to exertion which is widest, most constant, and most powerful in its operations in all civilized countries, is the desire of distinction; and this may be composed either of love of fame or love of wealth or of both. In literary and artistic and scientific pursuits, sometimes the strongest influence is exerted by a love of the subject. But it may safely be said that no man has ever labored in any of the higher colleges to whom the applause and appreciation of his fellows was not one of the sweetest rewards of his exertions.

What is there we would ask, in the nature of democratic institutions, that should render this great spring of action

powerless, that should deprive glory of all radiance, and put ambition to sleep? Is it not notorious, on the contrary, that one of the most marked peculiarities of democratic society, or of a society drifting toward democracy, is the fire of competition which rages in it, the fevered anxiety which possesses all its members to rise above the dead level to which the law is ever seeking to confine them, and by some brilliant stroke become something higher and more remarkable than their fellows? The secret of that great restlessness which is one of the most disagreeable accompaniments of life in democratic countries, is in fact due to the eagerness of everybody to grasp the prizes of which in aristocratic countries, only the few have much chance. And in no other society is success more worshiped, is distinction of any kind more widely flattered and caressed.

In democratic societies, in fact, excellence is the first title to distinction; in aristocratic ones there are two or three others which are far stronger and which must be stronger or aristocracy could not exist. The moment you acknowledge that the highest social position ought to be the reward of the man who has the most talent, you make aristocratic institutions impossible.

All that was buoyant and creative in American life would be lost if we gave up the respect for distinct personality, and variety in genius, and came to the dead level of common standards. To be "socialized into an average" and placed "under the tutelage of the mass of us," as a recent writer has put it, would be an irreparable loss. Nor is it necessary in a democracy, as these words of Godkin well disclose. What is needed is the multiplication of motives for ambition and the opening of new lines of achievement for the strongest. As we turn from the task of the first rough conquest of the continent there lies before us a whole wealth of unexploited resources in the realm of the spirit.

Arts and letters, science and better social creation, loyalty and political service to the commonweal,—these and a thousand other directions of activity are open to the men, who formerly under the incentive of attaining distinction by amassing extraordinary wealth, saw success only in material display. Newer and finer careers will open to the ambitious when once public opinion shall award the laurels to those who rise above their fellows in these new fields of labor. It has not been the gold, but the getting of the gold, that has caught the imaginations of our captains of industry. Their real enjoyment lay not in the luxuries which wealth brought, but in the work of construction and in the place which society awarded them. A new era will come if schools and universities can only widen the intellectual horizon of the people, help to lay the foundations of a better industrial life, show them new goals for endeavor, inspire them with more varied and higher ideals.

The Western spirit must be invoked for new and nobler achievements. Of that matured Western spirit, Tennyson's Ulysses is a symbol.

". . . I am become a name
For always roaming with a hungry heart,
Much have I seen and known . . . I am a part of
all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch, where
thru' Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin
fades
Forever and forever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnished, not to shine in
use!

And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a shining star
Beyond the utmost bound of human
thought. . . Come my friends, 'Tis not too late to seek a
newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the Western stars until I die

To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield."

Frontier Folk

By George Booth

What do we mean by the frontier? And what, by frontier folk? The terms came into vogue when tolerably well-defined lines marked the onset of civilization at the far West, and all beyond was wilderness. Yet to-day, with settlements scattered over all the Territories, the phrase loses none of its significance. It still has a geographical import, and another, deeper than the geographical, suggesting a peculiar civilization and a certain characteristic mode of life. It does not bring to mind those prosperous colonies whose lands, surveyed, secured by good legal titles, and freed from danger of savage inroads, have a permanent population busily engaged in founding homes. It takes us rather to the boundaries of the Indian reservations, along which scattered camps and settlements of white men are fringed; to lands which, though legally open for settlement, are constantly menaced by Indians; to those strange, shifting communities which sometimes, like Jonah's gourd, spring up in a night only to wither away in a day.

It is the purpose of this paper to present a sketch of the life and people of this frontier region as the writer has become familiar with them, depicting the types and manners of mankind, and leaving for more profound narrators the matters of statistical detail.

Social estimation and intercourse on the frontier are based upon a very short acquaintance. A large and catholic charity presumes every man to be that which he desires to appear. To pry into the secret history of his former life, to pass

hostile criticisms on it even when known to be discreditable, is not considered a public-spirited act; for those turbulent energies or uncontrolled passions which drove him out of eastern communities may prove of great service to that new country to which he has come. The first element of success in a frontier settlement is that a sufficient number of nomads should be willing to sustain each other in the belief that "this spot is to be a city and a centre." The news that a considerable group is already gathered on any such foreordained and favored spot brings others; nor do the arrivals cease until a day comes when it is bruited abroad that some of the "first citizens" have revised their views of its glorious destiny, and have left it for a new Eden. The sojourner in such regions—he cannot be called an inhabitant—lives in expectation of the coming settler who will pay him cash for his "claim"; or else perhaps he devotes himself to discovering a lode or a placer, which, if disposed of, may put him in funds for a year's spree; or again he may be a trapper, perpetually shifting his place as the peltry grows scarce. These indicate the respectable callings or expectancies of the solid men in frontier life; but they are surrounded by a larger throng of men, who hang about settlements with the possible hope of an honest El Dorado, but who in the meantime, and until this shall come, take to the surreptitious borrowing of horses without leave, or to the industries of the faro-table, or to the "road agency," by which phrase is signified the unlawful collection of a highway toll amounting usually to whatever of value the traveller may have about him. There are no superfluous refinements and gradations in frontier society. The citizen is either "an elegant gentleman" or a liar and a horse-thief. Yet even people of the latter description are rarely molested unless taken in the actual practice of their profession, which they ply, to say the truth, with such discrimination as to make interference with them difficult; but if caught in the

very act and overpowered, their fate is sudden—they are "got rid of."

In fact, homicide on the frontier, as compared with horse-stealing, is a peccadillo. The horse has a positive value; the thief, a negative one. Justice does not pursue the man who slays his fellow in a quarrel; but if it grasps the stealer of a purse on the prairie or of a horse from the herd, his last day has come. Yet he always has the chance of escaping capture, and of playing in other frontier cities the *rôle* of "elegant gentleman" on his earnings, reimbursing himself in a professional way; and he may continue in this career even if suspected, provided he does not ply his vocation in those communities which he honors with his presence when not engaged in prosecuting his business. Personal violence is, however, mostly confined to instances where it is for the profit of the aggressor. The traditional free-fight, or killing a man at sight, is rare, probably much rarer than in the Southwest. Benton, the head of navigation on the Missouri, was the place where, according to the story, the early morning visitor at the bar-room, before it had been swept out, expressed his surprise, although he knew the soil to be good for vegetables, at the excellence of its fruit, judging from the large size of the grapes he saw on the floor, when he was informed, "Stranger, them's eyes!"—the results of the preceding evening's amusement. Yet in two visits to Benton the writer saw not the least sign of violence even in amusement, although he would be sorry to have some Bentonians around his camp at night if the horses were not well guarded, or to meet them on the prairie without sufficient protection.

If a settlement becomes permanent and prosperous, whether through commerce, mining, or agriculture, the first settlers sell out as soon as they can get cash in hand, and seek new domains. There are men who have passed their

manhood in taking out claims, building ranches, and "realizing" for better or for worse, on a journey from Texas to Montana, sometimes taking in California by the way. Very often the wife, children, and stock of the pilgrim accompany him. Often a cabin is put up and inhabited by a family, with a retinue of cattle, horses, pigs, and poultry in the barn, only to be deserted the next year on the mere report of some better claim to be found further on. There never seems to be any real misery among these shiftless people. Their children grow up sturdy and ignorant, their stock and chickens multiply as they journey on. It may be a new stage-route which gives them a year's sustenance, such as it is, by their squatting on good enough grass-land to be able to fill a hay contract. Or they may go to a point near which some new military post is about to be built, where they can raise some vegetables to sell to the troops before the company gardens become productive. Or they may take out a claim on some really good spot, where permanent settlers speedily follow them. But as soon as they can see flour, bacon, and tobacco, and find a little in the pocket for whiskey and clothes, sufficient to last for a year ahead, off they go again,—not so much like gypsies, who will often revisit the same spot, as like the Wandering Jew, pursued by an avenging angel, driving them from contact with steady and methodical people. Their household stuff is packed in their "prairie schooners," as their wagons are called, and on they move by easy stages, seldom taking the trouble to pitch a tent at night, the women sleeping in the wagons and the men on the ground beneath them. There is plenty of grass for the stock, and the weather is pleasant. There is no especial hurry or worry: it is only necessary to reach somewhere, in time to put up a log hut and a shed for the stock, for the winter's shelter. The little army of the United States, spread over a country as large as the Roman Empire, does its duty so well that there is only occasional danger from Indians roaming away from their reservations, and the